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March 4, 2003

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: James A. Noyes
Director of Public Works

FLOOD PROBLEMS IN THE QUARTZ HILL AREA OF ANTELOPE VALLEY

On February 18, 2003, the Board instructed Public Works to provide a report on remedial action and recommendations to be taken to avoid future flooding problems in the Quartz Hill area of Antelope Valley. The following is our report.

The flooding problems in the Quartz Hill area are not new and will remain a problem until storm water improvements are constructed. The Quartz Hill area lies north of Avenue S within the County of Los Angeles' unincorporated area and is outside the boundaries of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD). The recent storm of February 11, 2003, produced a total rainfall of 4.13 inches in the Quartz Hill area. The storm was approximately a 25-year frequency event. It flooded businesses, homes, streets, and driveways. The majority of the flooding occurred along 50th Street West, 52nd Street West, and 45th Street West between Avenue M-8 and Avenue L. The last time a similar flooding occurred was the storm on February 27, 1991, which produced a total rainfall of 3.72 inches. Public Works submitted the storm report to the Board on April 18, 1991 (see attached Quartz Hill Storm Report and map).

The Board adopted the Antelope Valley Comprehensive Plan of Flood Control and Water Conservation on June 23, 1987. The Plan proposes drainage facilities in Antelope Valley to provide a regional flood control system to protect existing and future development. Over the past decade, we have worked with the Quartz Hill community and the Cities of Palmdale and Lancaster to develop interim and long-range drainage improvements consistent with the Plan.

Public Works worked with the Quartz Hill community to develop proposals for a County Improvement District and a Community Facilities District for a special assessment area to finance drainage improvements. The proposals were presented to the community during the September 25, 1990, Quartz Hill Town Council meeting. The community expressed strong opposition to the proposals although they acknowledged that flood control improvements are needed.

In 1992, an advisory vote was taken by the residents in the Antelope Valley asking them to select one of the three following options:

1. Expand existing LACFCD boundary from Avenue S northerly to the County of Los Angeles boundary line (25 percent supported).
2. Create a new separate flood control district in the Antelope Valley (45 percent supported).
3. No changes to the current LACFCD boundary (30 percent supported).

On November 7, 1995, Proposition B was voted on to create the formation of the Antelope Valley Storm Water Conservation and Flood Control District that would encompass all of County of Los Angeles north of Avenue S and parts of Kern County. The results were 77 percent against the Proposition.

Since then, a Quartz Hill Drain project was pursued to reduce local flooding problems and provide minimal flood protection. Funding was secured for the \$2.2 million project using a Community Development Block Grant of \$1.5 million and the remainder from special Road District funds. A special maintenance assessment district was developed to fund long-term maintenance. Public Works conducted a survey in April 1999 and found the community did not support the formation of a maintenance assessment district. On December 28, 1999, Public Works resurveyed the community after additional outreach efforts by members of the Quartz Hill Town Council. Again the community did not support the project. The project was placed on hold and the \$1.5 million grant was lost.

Public Works has made numerous attempts to provide this community with a regional flood control system consistent with the 1987 Antelope Valley Comprehensive Plan (see attached chronology).

To develop a long-term solution to the flooding problems in the Quartz Hill area will require finding a source of funds, not only to plan, design, and construct the needed facilities, but also for annual operation, maintenance, and repair of any facilities. As a first step, we

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recommend a new conceptual drainage study to address the current conditions based on the recent developments in the area. Funding will have to be found for the study.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Brian Sasaki, Deputy Director, at (626) 458-4008.

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Attach.

cc: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office